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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 TRSE-00 IO-13 ACDA-12
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 CA-01 /107 W
----------109445 251800Z /42
R 251520Z AUG 78
FM USMISSION USBERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7554
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USBERLIN 2024

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, ELAB, SREF, WB, GW, TU, PK, LE, IN
SUBJECT: CONTINUED INFLOW OF ASIAN REFUGEES CONCERNS SENAT AND
COULD POSE PROBLEMS FOR OTHER FOREIGN RESIDENTS

REF: (A) 77 USBER 3101, (NOTAL), (B) 77 USBER 3123 (NOTAL),
(C) 77 USBER 3079 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH ACTIONS BY WEST BERLIN'S AUTHORITIES LAST
FALL (REFTELS) TEMPORARILY STEMMED THE FLOW OF PAKISTANIS CLAIM-
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ING POLITICAL ASYLUM AS A MEANS OF STAYING IN WEST BERLIN, THE
NUMBER OF UNSKILLED AND DESTITUTE "ASYLUM SEEKERS" HAS ONCE
AGAIN REACHED DISTURBINGLY HIGH LEVELS. SENAT EFFORTS TO PRO-
CESS THE REFUGEES IN AN ORDERLY FASHION HAVE BEEN RESISTED BY
LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS WHO ARE INCREASINGLY UN-
WILLING TO TOLERATE ASYLUM APPLICANTS IN THEIR NEIGHBOR-
HOODS, AND WHO RESENT TAX MONEY BEING PAID OUT IN VARIOUS

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FORMS OF SUPPORT TO THESE UNWANTED FOREIGNERS. THE SENAT IS CONCERNED THAT THE NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE BEING CREATED BY THE CURRENT PUBLICITY ABOUT THE "POLITICAL ASSYLEES" WILL SPILL OVER AGAINST THE NEARLY 190,000 FOREIGNERS (MOSTLY GUEST WORKERS) IN THE CITY. IT HOPES TO CONTROL THE CURRENT PROBLEM BEFORE IT THREATENS TO BECOME AN EMOTIONALLY CHARGED CAMPAIGN ISSUE. SENAT PLANS TO REINSTITUTE PROGRAM OF RETURNING IMPROPERLY DOCUMENTED ALIENS TO THEIR HOME COUNTRIES VIA CHARTERED AIRCRAFT. END SUMMARY.

1. ADDRESSEES WILL RECALL THAT IN THE LATTER PART OF 1977 WEST BERLIN EXPERIENCED A SUDDEN INFLUX OF SEVERAL THOUSAND "POLITICAL ASYLUM APPLICANTS" FROM THE PUNJABI REGION OF PAKISTAN. THESE PUNJABIS TURNED OUT TO BE MIGRANT WORKERS RECRUITED BY A RING OF PAKISTANI ORGANIZERS AND CHANNELED TO WEST BERLIN WHERE THEY WERE INSTRUCTED TO APPLY FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM AS A MEANS OF OBTAINING THE RIGHT TO STAY IN WEST BERLIN OR THE FRG. (REFTELS B&C) AT THAT TIME, THE BERLIN SENAT HAD HOPED THAT AN ACTIVE MEDIA INFORMATION PROGRAM IN PAKISTAN, DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTION BY THE FRG EMBASSY IN ISLAMABAD AND THE RETURN OF SEVERAL PLANE LOADS OF PAKISTANI "ASYLEES" TO THEIR HOME REGIONS (REF A) WOULD TURN OFF THE FLOW OF THESE REALLY QUITE HELPLESS PEOPLE.

2. SENAT OFFICIALS NOW REPORT THAT AFTER AN INITIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DROP OFF IN ASYLUM APPLICANTS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY (AVERAGE 350-400 PER MONTH), THE NUMBERS BEGAN TO RISE AGAIN IN MARCH AND APRIL (600-700 PER MONTH). SINCE THEN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICANTS FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM HAS AVERAGED ABOUT 1400 PERSONS MONTHLY (ROUGHLY 350 FROM INDIA, 550 FROM PAKISTAN AND 500 FROM ARAB COUNTRIES, MOSTLY LEBANON). PRELIMINARY FIGURES FOR THE FIRST TWO WEEKS IN AUGUST SHOW THE NUMBERS TO BE RISING STILL FURTHER. TO COPE WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF ASYLUM SEEKERS, THE SENAT HAS PROPOSED OPENING A SPECIAL CENTRALIZED ASYLEE ASSISTANCE OFFICE TO PROCESS PAPERS AND ADMINISTER WELFARE SUPPORT PROGRAMS. RESISTANCE TO THE SENAT'S PROPOSAL BY RESIDENTS NEAR PROPOSED SITES FOR PROCESSING OFFICE HAS BEEN EXTREMELY STIFF, HOWEVER, AND THE SENAT WAS FORCED TO CHANGE THE PLANNED LOCATION OF THE OFFICE 23 TIMES OVER A TWO MONTH PERIOD BEFORE REACHING AGREEMENT TO SET IT UP IN WEDDING. INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZED CITIZENS ACTION GROUPS OPPOSING THE OPENING OF THE ASYLEES' ASSISTANCE OFFICE HAVE BLOCKED SENAT PROPOSALS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. ALTHOUGH THEY ARGUE FORMALLY ON THE BASIS OF CITY PLANNING AND ZONING, THEY ALSO STATE OPENLY THAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO

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SEE LARGE NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED, SEMI-DESTITUTE "ASIANS"
COLLECTED IN THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. BERLIN RESIDENTS ALSO
RESENT THE AMOUNT OF TAX MONEY WHICH MUST BE DISTRIBUTED
TO THESE UNWANTED ALIENS WHO ARE ABUSING THE GERMAN
ASYLUM LAW, (PERHAPS THE MOST LIBERAL IN THE WORLD)
SOLELY AS A MEANS OF OBTAINING A HANDOUT. (ASYLUM APPLI-
CANTS RECEIVE UP TO DM 1,000 PER MONTH IN CASH AND KIND

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UNLESS AND UNTIL THEY FIND WORK.)

3. BERLIN SENAT OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASYLEES,
NOTABLY SENATOR FOR LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, OLAF SUND,
HAVE EXPRESSED DISMAY AT WHAT THEY TERM THE
"THINLY DISGUISED RACISM" OF MANY BERLINERS WHO, IN SUND'S
OPINION, SHOULD SHOW MORE UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PLIGHT
OF THE INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED, NO MATTER WHAT MOTIVATED

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THEM TO LEAVE THEIR HOMELANDS OR HOW THEY CAME TO
BERLIN. SUND HAS POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE LAW THE
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SENAT IS OBLIGATED TO ASSIST THE ASYLUM APPLICANTS,
AND HE HAS CALLED FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING FROM BERLIN
RESIDENTS. PRIVATELY, THE SENAT IS VERY CONCERNED BY
THE DEVELOPING SITUATION. IN LATE 1977, IT HAD BEEN
POSSIBLE IN ALMOST EVERY CASE TO SEND ASYLUM APPLICANTS
TO RELOCATION CENTERS IN THE FRG, THEREBY PRECLUDING
THE BUILDUP AND SPREAD OF VARIOUS SOCIAL AND POTENTIAL
CRIMINAL PROBLEMS IN BERLIN ITSELF. NOW, HOWEVER, WE
ARE TOLD BY SENAT OFFICIALS, THE RELOCATION CENTERS IN
THE FRG ARE FILLED TO CAPACITY AND BERLIN MUST KEEP THE
CURRENT WAVE OF APPLICANTS IN THE CITY. WITH FEW OR NO
SKILLS, LITTLE OR NO KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN, VIRTUALLY NO
PROSPECTS FOR FINDING WORK, FACING A HOSTILE LOCAL POPU-
LACE AND LIVING ON GOVERNMENT HANDOUTS, THE ACCUMULATING
NUMBER OF ASYLEES ARE REGARDED BY THE SENAT AS THE
POTENTIAL CAUSE OF A NASTY EXPLOSION HERE.

4. THUS FAR, MOST PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE SITUATION
HAVE COME FROM LOCAL CITIZENS' GROUPS, THE PRESS IT-
SELF AND SOME INDIVIDUAL POLITICIANS. MOST COMMENTATORS
HAVE FOCUSED THEIR REMARKS ON THE ISSUE OF THE "ASYLEES"
AS A SPECIFIC GROUP. THE SENAT IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER,
THAT UNLESS THE CURRENT PROBLEM IS BROUGHT UNDER CON-
TROL QUICKLY AND EFFICENTLY, THE RESENTMENT FELT BY
MANY BERLINERS WILL DEVELOP INTO A FORM OF "BACKLASH"
DIRECTED AGAINST THE LARGE NUMBER OF LEGALLY RESIDENT
GUEST WORKERS IN THE CITY. A RELATIVELY NARROWLY
FOCUSED PROBLEM COULD THUS TURN INTO A BROAD AND POTEN-
TIALLY EXPLOSIVE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ISSUE. THE SENAT,
AS RECENTLY AS JUNE, REACHED AGREEMENT ON A PROGRAM TO
STUDY AND DEVELOP GOVERNMENT PROJECTS TO FACILITATE
THE INTEGRATON OF GUEST WORKERS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS
INTO THE FABRIC OF BERLIN LIFE. THE SENAT DOES NOT
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WANT A HEATED POLITICAL DEBATE DURING THE UPCOMING
ELECTION CAMPAIGN TO ENDANER ITS FLEDGLING PROGRAM
WHICH INCLUDES POLICIES TO DISBURSE PRESENT CONCENTRATIONS
OF FOREIGNERS THROUGHOUT THE CITY; TO PROVIDE UP TO 20
PERCENT OF NEW SOCIAL HOUSING UNITS TO FOREIGNERS,
AND TO OFFER SPECIAL "HEAD START" SUPPLEMENTARY ACADEMIC
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY DESIGND

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TO MEET THE NEEDS OF GUEST WORKER CHILDREN. THE NEED FOR THE LATTER PROGRAMS ARE PARTICULARLY ACUTE BECAUSE GUEST WORKER CHILDREN REPRESENT 9.2 PERCENT OF BERLIN'S SCHOOL POPULATION AND MAKE UP 75 TO 80 PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS IN SOME INNER-CITY SCHOOLS. (OVER 27 PERCENT OF THE FOREIGNERS IN BERLIN ARE UNDER THE AGE OF 16.)

5. AS ITS FIRST STEP IN DEALING WITH THE LATEST WAVE OF ASIAN ASYLEES, THE SENAT INTENDS TO INITIATE A NEW PROGRAM OF RETURNING NEWLY ARRIVED ALIENS TO THEIR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN, USING CHARTER AIRCRAFT. THE FIRST SUCH EFFORT IS PLANNED FOR AUGUST 30 OR 31.

6. COMMENT: IN COURSE OF DISCUSSION AUGUST 22, THE ACTING HEAD OF THE BERLIN SENAT CHANCELLERY TOLD REPRESENTATIVES OF THREE ALLIED MISSIONS THAT THE SENAT PLANS TO ADHERE STRICTLY TO EXISTING LAW IN DEALING WITH THIS GROWING FLOOD OF ASYLUM APPLICANTS. GERMAN ASYLUM LAW, HE REMINDED ALLIED REPS, IS PERHAPS THE MOST LIBERAL IN THE WORLD, AND ONCE A REPUTED ASYLUM APPLICANT REACHES THE FRG OR WEST BERLIN TERRITORY AND PROPERLY REQUESTS ASYLUM, HE CAN STAY UNTIL HIS CASE IS HEARD IN THE COURTS. WITH THE PRESENT CASE BACKLOG, THIS CAN TAKE YEARS. GERMAN LAW DOES PROVIDE A SMALL LOOPHOLE FOR REMOVING "ASYLEES", PROVIDED ACTION IS TAKEN WITHIN A WEEK OF THEIR ARRIVAL AND THEY HAVE NOT HAD COACHING FROM A LAWYER. SENAT ASKED FOR ALLIED INDULGENCE WHEN IT TAKES ACTIONS TO STEM THE FLOW OF "ASYLUM SEEKERS" AND HOPES THAT A RENEWED PROGRAM OF INFORMATION WILL HELP STEM
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THE ASYLEE FLOW. ULTIMATELY, THE SENAT MAY HAVE TO COME TO THE ALLIES AND SEEK THEIR ASSISTANCE IN MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR BERLIN OFFICIALS TO REFUSE ENTRY TO ILLEGITIMATE ASYLUM APPLICANTS OR TO HAVE THEM REMOVED FROM THE CITY. NELSON

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TAGS: PGOV, ELAB, SREF, WB, GE, TU, PK, LE, IN
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